Pak Offers Nuclear Curbs Regime

3328. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item in the Hindustan Times dated 14th June, 2000 captioned "with US in focus, Pak offers N curbs regime";

(b) if so, whether Government are aware that Pakistan had resumed nuclear and security issues dialogue with the United States on 15th June, 2000;

(c) if so, whether India was offered by Pakistan a nuclear and conventional weapons restraint regime on a reciprocal basis to avoid arms race in the region; and

(d) if so, Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) On 13th June 2000, Pakistan, through an official statement, suggested that India and Pakistan adhere to a "strategic restraint regime for avoidance of an arms race, nuclear and conventional, and confidence building in the region.....on a reciprocal basis".

(d) This proposal is not new and remains based on Pakistan's desire to seek parity with India; it has been put forward with propagandist intent. India has taken the lead in initiating discussions at the bilateral level on formalisation of restraint in the region including during PM's historic visit to Lahore in February 1999. Unfortunately, Pakistan's armed intrusion in Kargil and its repudiation of mutually agreed upon confidence-building measures and agreements, has set this process back. Pakistan needs to take necessary steps to restore trust to enable this process to resume.

Israel's Help in Fighting Terrorism

3329. SHRI K.M. SAIFULLAH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has sought Israel's help to fight terrorism;

(b) Israel's reaction thereto; and

(c) Government's latest policy on Israel?